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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### "THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LETTER OF THE WAR"

SIR,—In a strict sense, there can of course be no such thing as "the most beautiful letter of the war." None the less, the letter which is here translated and appended has come to be spoken of in this manner. It has circulated in manuscript copies and has become known to many judges of good literature, who, for lack of a better name, have formed the habit of speaking of it as "the most beautiful letter of the war."

The letter was written by Eugène Deshayes, the 18th of August, 1914, to his wife Henriette or, more tenderly, "Rietta." Eugène Deshayes was a simple workman, living at Pont-Saint-Pierre, France. He was twenty-five years old, and, like all able-bodied Frenchmen, was a soldier. At the beginning of the war, he joined his battalion and took part in the early battles. It is not known any too definitely where or in what battle he fell, but the Germans found on his body a letter which was to be sent to his wife in case of his death. The letter was forwarded to Geneva, and was sent from there to Pont-Saint-Pierre. But the young widow and her children had left the village, nor has any search ever discovered their whereabouts! The letter was returned to the post-office, opened and copies made and circulated, in the hope of finding the widow. One of these copies fell into the hands of Monsieur Gustave Lanson, the great literary critic, whose wife kindly made a copy for me.

Columbia University.

RAYMOND WEEKS.

#### [DESHAYES' LETTER]

My Darling,

Today as I write these lines my heart is like to break, and if you ever read them, it will mean that I died doing my duty. I beg you, ere I disappear forever, to continue to bring up our children in honor and in the memory of me, for I shall have loved them much and shall have died thinking of them and of you.

Tell them always that I died on the Field of Honor, and that I

ask them to sacrifice themselves in the same manner the day when France may have need of their arm and their heart.

Preserve the certificate of good conduct which I received on leaving the regiment, and later you will make them understand that their papa would have been happy to live solely for them and for you, whom I have always so tenderly loved.

Now, I tell you good-bye. It costs me much anguish to die so far from you at the age of twenty-five, when I should have liked to live a long time, to be near you. But what would you? It is fate; and today, as I write these words, I should like for you never to have occasion to read them, for this paper will not come to you unless I fall under the bullets.

Now, I do not wish you to pass the rest of your life in devotion to one dead. Quite to the contrary, if in your life you should meet an honest lad, diligent and capable of aiding you loyally to bring up our children, well! unite your life to his; and never speak to him of me, for, if he loves you, it would sadden him to feel the shadow of a dead man about him.

Of course, I am speaking of an intelligent and loyal fellow, who would know how to understand your situation. Understand that if I speak to you in this way, it is not that my love for you has disappeared; no, quite the contrary. I love you so that I suffer cruelly under these unfortunate circumstances in which I risk my life and the love of my home, to which I have always devoted myself.

My Henriette, I ask of you one thing: it is that, until the day when God shall call you too, you think of your poor Génot, who loved you so madly and so sincerely, with a love which will follow him to the grave. Think of my memory and speak of me to our poor children.

My darling, it is over. I love you and forever, even unto eternity.  
My Rietta, good-bye!

Your Génot who adored you.

#### FOR THE SAKE OF THE RECORD

SIR,—In a recent issue of your magazine you call attention to the fact that “early in the present war practically all the prominent scientists in Germany signed a manifesto supporting the Berlin Government in its most flagrant falsehoods and crimes, and attempting to justify even such an infamy as the destruction of Louvain.” I remember well the publication of that document and, if my memory serves me faithfully, there was much that was infamous in that manifesto that the world should not forget. I therefore suggest and beg of you to publish that document in full, giving the name in full of every signer. The names of these men should go down in infamy, because they were knowingly lending themselves to one of the most infamous acts ever perpetrated by man.

A. W. FORMAN.

CHULA VISTA, CAL.

[Long as the document in question is, with its roll of dishonored signatures, we gladly comply with our correspondent's request. Every one of the categorical statements which these German University pro-